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The Whirligig of Fortune Has Brought to Men Where Wealth is Dug From the Earth—Tale of Jake Kilner's Success After Years of Waiting—How a Horse and Wagon Made Their Owner Rich—A Reporter's Golden Idea.

Los Angeles Correspondence of the New York Sun: There are some newly made millionaires out here in the south-west who are nowadays the talk of every mining camp of the territories and the Pacific coast, and whose achievements of riches in the last few years are illustrations of the wonderful changes that the whirligig of fortune has to men where wealth is dug from the earth. The recent extraordinary increase in the value of copper is making a dozen men in California millionaires, and twice as many more men who were struggling with mortgage debts and a slow demand for copper at low prices a few years ago are getting into the money.

There has never been such activity in mining operations in the west as during the past year, and never before has there been anything like the number of men prowling over mountains, searching across desert wastes, in lonely gulches, through desolate canyons and among remote foothills for copper and deposits of valuable ore. In some way some men have leaped from comparative poverty to large wealth in five or six years is one of the wonders even in a land of quickly made fortunes.

For instance, there is Jacob Kilner, who is a copper and gold king of Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. After twenty-four years of all manner of adversity, patient plodding search for luck in prospecting, and after tremendous amount of endurance in heat and cold, he is enjoying an income of about \$8,000 a month, and owns property that he can sell almost any day for \$1,300,000. He was born in Laban, Prussia, forty-six years ago, and came to America with \$7 in his pocket. He was employed in a New York brewery for two years at seventy cents a day. Having a friend in Tucson, Ariz., he came west in 1873 to do anything he could to keep alive. He has been a hostler for the Arizona Stage Company, a guard for Wells, Fargo & Co., and a railroad brakeman. In a mining region one naturally takes an interest in mines. The fact that the mountains contain millions upon millions of mineral wealth that is yet to be claimed and developed for any one who is smart enough to make the right location is as great an allurements as the capital prize in a lottery. So along with thousands of other men Jake Kilner became a mining prospector.

There is a mining fever in the strict sense of the word one must have supreme patience, abnormal hope and confidence, undimmed zeal and a wealth of enthusiasm. Ninety-five per cent of the men who try prospecting for minerals are lacking in one or two of these qualities, and abandon the effort in a few weeks, only to renew it for a time when some one of them has struck it rich. Jake Kilner stuck to prospecting year in and year out. "It was three years before I ever knew what sort of rock I had to look for," said he, recently. He tramped over every mountain in the territory seeking for any indication of the presence of a profitable ledge of ore, across mountains, through God-forsaken valleys and gulches, all the way from El Paso to Colorado, from Raton, N. M., back to Albuquerque, from Tombstone to Yuma, from Mexico to Colorado. The wild, hard life he led for fourteen years would fill a book of thrilling narratives. He located dozens of mines, and worked some of them for months, only to find that the ore was too poor or too small in quantity to be worked at a profit. Jake Kilner and his half-starved jackass were known all over Arizona, and Kilner's perennial belief that he was soon going to strike it rich became one of the jests of miners camps.

At last Jake Kilner found a copper prospect in Gila county that looked well. He had about \$70 that he had made by doing day labor in the copper mines at Bisbee, and settled down in a \$3 tent with all of his earthly possessions, consisting of a frying pan, a kettle, a coffee pot, two blankets and a few mining tools, he went to work to open his copper claim. He worked at it for eleven weeks, in 1883, when copper was at its lowest market value, and capital was a scarce article in the territories. After months of vain seeking for some one to come and look at his copper ledge Kilner trudged over the mountains and alkali desert, across the Superstition and San Rita mountains, down into Sonora, Mexico, where he got work at day wages in a silver mine. He still owned the copper property and had done enough work on it to hold the claim for a year. After he had saved \$100 he went prospecting again. He traveled along with his jackass some 300 miles altogether, sleeping out of doors, eating wild fruit, and looking out for hostile Yaqui Indians. And now his luck was due. He found two claims in five months. One was a base ore mine—a combination of lead and silver—and the other was gold ore that ran about \$14 to the ton. He met a German, a man who

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bought the base ore property at \$4,000.

That was Jake Kilner's first real capital after his years of poverty and hardship. With that sum he began the development of his gold mine, and in a year he got out and shipped out that brought \$900 clear profit. Then the Mexicans who owned the reduction mill where he sent his ore became interested, and offered \$50,000 for a half-interest in the gold mine. Kilner was tempted to take the offer, but he knew he had a good thing and he was worth more money. A year later he sold his share for \$30,000. That was in March, 1896.

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"We were speechless when we saw the rock full of golden specks," said Burchum, in telling of it afterward. "When I could get my tongue I looked about me, and said: 'How much do you think there is of such rock?' 'The whole damn mountain looks full of it,' replied Moore. Then he continued: 'All we've got to do is to show it in a reduction mill, and be Vanderbilts.' 'We've been shoveling the mountain into a mill for several years, and we've

only scratched into it as far. I believe Moore is dead right about the whole mountain being full of gold."

The town of Randburg has grown there since. For two years there was not a more active, rollicking, wide-open camp in America. Thousands of claims were soon made by the great crowds of miners who flocked there from all parts of the west, but less than a dozen miles outside of the Rand group have ever been developed. The firm of Moore, Burchum & Singleton has expended over \$450,000 in developing the property, and now has a pay roll of about \$5,500 a week. Mr. Moore lives in a house in Los Angeles that has cost him over \$40,000, and Burchum and Singleton are putting \$100,000 in a home they will own jointly in the suburbs. The Rand Mining Company frequently has bank deposits of upward of \$300,000, and now that the mines are in good working order, and are well opened, the money will roll in faster than ever. Five years ago the present partners had altogether not over \$200.

Kilner's fortune has grown rapidly from that time. The Armadillo mine has paid some \$120,000 in profits since then, and it is still yielding from \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month. Four years ago Kilner returned with ample means to his copper mine in Gila county. He put in the best machinery he could buy, sunk shafts and drifted and cross-cut into the ledge. Copper was not profitable then, and many copper mines were idle. It took much hope and confidence to put \$18,000 into machinery to get out copper that had no buyers at living prices. In 1897, however, copper rose from 8 cents to 12 cents. The Kilner mine began to make more money. Extra laborers were hired, and the mine was deepened and explored the more. In 1898 the price of copper advanced to 14, 15 and even 17 cents a pound. Last winter it touched 19 cents, and the copper mines all over the west have prospered more than ever before.

Kilner readily declined to sell his mine in Gila county. He had an offer of \$100,000 for it in May, 1898. Last December he declined six offers of \$400,000, and within thirty days he could have sold it for \$850,000.

He lives well nowadays, but he clings to his old clothes and his clay pipe. He smiles when he speaks of the fact that he sleeps in a \$10 brass bed now, instead of a blanket on the ground, but he still lives in a cabin, and seldom goes away from home. A few months ago he gave an old man in Yavapai county, who was crippled and diseased from living on poor food in the mountains, \$5,000 with which to go to San Francisco and live in a hospital. The old man had nursed Jacob Kilner through typhoid fever in Yuma, a dozen years ago, and had never expected a dime for his kindness.

The recent acquirement of fortunes of millions of dollars by the three miners who discovered the gold-bearing ledges at Randburg, Cal., are narrated again and again by hopeful miners who gather in the saloons in the mining camps in this part of California. Indeed, there are no parallels in Southern California, at least, to the great fortune that Frederick A. Moore, Chester A. Burchum and John Singleton simply went out and claimed as theirs in April, 1898. Last year a Utah mining company offered \$4,500,000 for these mines. They have paid monthly dividends varying from \$18,000 to \$30,000 for nearly three years, and it is an undisputed statement among miners in and about Los Angeles that the Rand group has now over \$15,000,000 worth of ore blocked out in them.

Five years ago Frederick M. Moore was a reporter on the Los Angeles Express. He had been connected with the Brooklyn Eagle, and he came west to find a gold or silver mine. He had all the ups and downs of a reporter and his several attempts at gold mining were so decidedly down that he returned periodically to Los Angeles to take up newspaper work at a small salary. Five years ago John Singleton was a clerk in a little store at the railroad station of Mojave, on the Mojave desert, in southern California, and Chester A. Burchum was working in a butcher shop in San Francisco, Cal. The three met in the little desert mining camp at Goler, where dry washing for golden particles in the sand was carried on. For weeks the trio, in company with thirty or forty other men, eked out a living at Goler. Mr. Moore who had been a student of geology, and had read much about the formation of ledges and deposits of precious ores, began to wonder where the ledge was from which the tiny pieces in the sand had come. Day after day while he worked at the dry washer he pondered over the subject. He told his theory to Singleton, and finally they agreed to go and prospect. Days were spent in the search across the desert under a burning sun, where nothing grew, and not even birds were found. Singleton soon scouted Moore's theory, and returned to his dry washing. Suddenly Moore saw evidences that the Goler camp was in the center of an enormous extinct volcano, and he evolved the theory that if the outer rim of the volcano might be found the ledge from which the gold had been washed ages ago. Singleton was appealed to again, and at last he agreed to make another trip out on the desert to hunt for the rim of the volcano. It was about seventy miles to the region where Moore had decided to search. Walking that distance in the burning waste under a fierce sun was out of the question. There were only three horses in the camp, and hay and water were expensive articles. C. A. Burchum, who had come over from San Francisco with his butcher wagon and horse, was asked to furnish his rig, a bale of hay and a barrel of water, and he was to share equally in the result of the prospecting trip. He finally agreed to the speculation.

Two days later, April 23, 1895,